

GOING FURTHER TOGETHER

A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO GENDER EQUALITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a summary of an operational paper that responds to feedback from partners to clarify how the ambition on “gender hardwiring” as set out in GPE 2025 is delivered through GPE’s unique partnership approach. The paper was developed in consultation with GPE partner countries, donors, private foundations, country-level and international civil society organizations and GPE youth leaders.

Global Context of Gender Equality and Education

Despite significant progress in gender parity in access to education at the primary level, progress is beginning to stall in areas such as sub-Saharan Africa, where there has been no progress on girls’ enrollment in lower secondary since 2011 or in upper secondary since 2014.¹

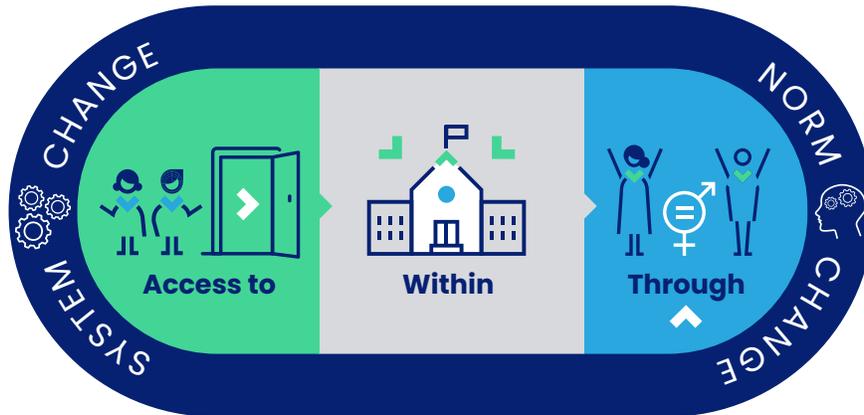
- Data show that gendered patterns of dropout for boys and girls are amplified when combined with social norms and characteristics such as poverty, disability or marginalized ethnicity.²
- Beyond parity in access, data reveal how education spaces can continue to reinforce gender inequalities. This might include schools being sites of high levels of gender-based violence or teaching methods and textbooks that reinforce gender stereotypes.
- To address these complex issues, there is increasing recognition of the need for a system-level approach on gender equality in access to, within and through education.

A System and Social Norm Change Approach to Gender Equality in Education

- Stakeholders need to move beyond short-term, project-level solutions for gender equality to **create long-term, sustainable change** that delivers on the Sustainable Development Goals on gender equality and quality education for all.
- GPE recognizes that solutions to **gender equality in education need to look beyond access**, focusing on **gender equality within and through education** through a system change approach.
- An **intentional integration of social norms** is key to a gender-transformative system change approach. This involves engaging policy makers, education decision makers and community actors with **social norm efforts** to address gender inequalities in education.

1 Global Education Monitoring Report Team, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2022: Gender Report, Deepening the Debate on Those Still Left Behind* (Paris: UNESCO, 2022).

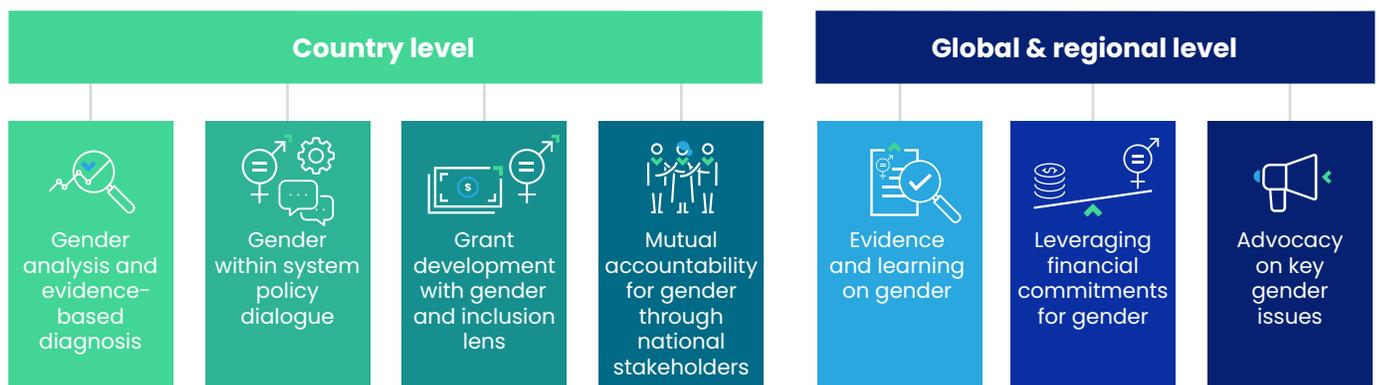
2 Kelly A. Yotebieng, “What We Know (and Do Not Know) about Persistent Social Norms That Serve as Barriers to Girls’ Access, Participation and Achievement in Education in Eight Sub-Saharan African Countries” (New York: UNGEI, 2021).



- **Access to education:** The promotion of equal access for all aims to address the disparities in education that occur when gender and other characteristics combined with context lead to many girls and boys being denied their right to education.
- **Within education:** Even when children have overcome the gender barriers to attending school, learning experiences within schools are still deeply gendered. System-level reform within education has the potential to introduce policies and practices that include gender-responsive pedagogies, where teaching and learning processes pay attention to the specific learning needs of girls and boys.
- **Through education:** Schools have the potential to model environments where people are given opportunities to thrive regardless of gender. By addressing gender equality through education, young people learn essential critical thinking skills, which helps them to understand their rights and become agents for change.

GPE Gender Equality Entry Points

GPE has found **tangible opportunities in operational processes to advance gender equality.**



- For example, under “**Gender analysis and evidence-based diagnosis**,” there is a tangible opportunity to ensure that the early assessment and diagnosis phases of GPE’s partnership processes include gender evidence and analysis. Analyses should consider how environments can create different levels of educational marginalization due to gender, age, disability, race/ethnicity, geography, refugee/non-refugee and socioeconomic status.

- › Local education group members support government-led analysis of the policy environment and education system in this phase. Gender analysis should consider key data, including gendered, age and location-specific patterns of attendance; cultural norms that affect education; out-of-school populations; and the gender trends of teachers in urban or rural locations.
- › Under “**Gender within system policy dialogue**,” where education ministries host an inclusive policy dialogue, **country-level gender expertise must be included in the task team** contributing to dialogue and strategic decision making. This ensures that gender evidence and analysis is considered within the selection of the prioritized reform area captured in the partnership compact.
- › Further examples and case studies are included in the full paper (section 2.2) to illustrate how gender equality is being operationalized within the partnership across all these possible entry points.

Guiding Principles for Operationalizing Gender Equality

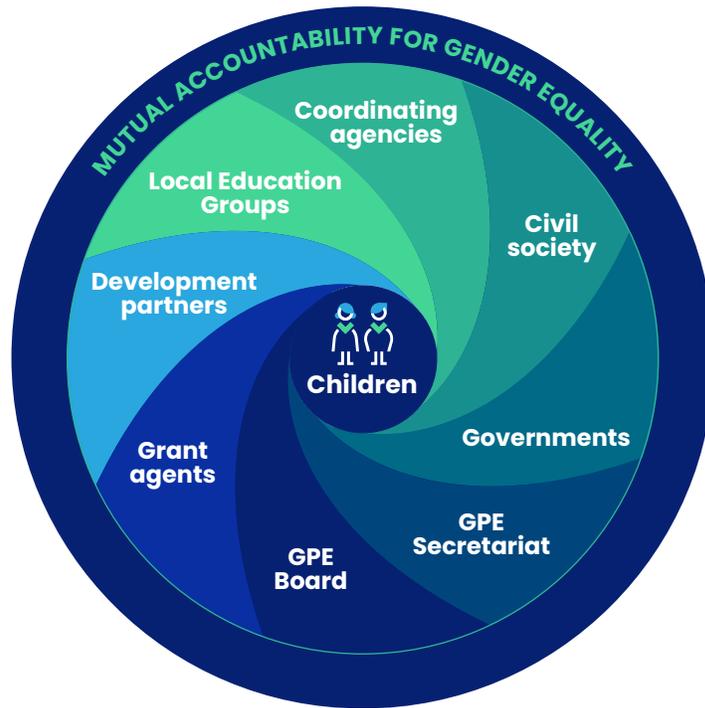
The guiding principles for gender equality are grounded in international commitments and protocols. They are the foundation on which constructive dialogue and programming decisions are based across GPE. The eight principles articulate what partners should be maintaining across their processes to make significant progress toward gender equality within GPE programming.

- › **Leadership** that promotes gender equality and encourages diverse debate to resolve complex problems
- › Use of up-to-date and context-specific **gender analysis and evidence**
- › Maintaining an **intersectional** lens that recognizes how gender and other identities can create exclusion
- › Building gender equality **capacity** across teams, and prioritizing gender expertise
- › Finding **system solutions to gender equality** in education
- › Ensuring priority reform decisions are built through **inclusive processes**
- › Including a gender lens in risk assessment to ensure programs **do no harm**
- › Ensuring GPE stakeholders have shared **accountability** for gender equality.

See section 2.4 of the paper for more detail on each principle.

Ensuring Mutual Accountability for Gender Equality Across the Partnership

GPE 2025 promotes the principles and practice of mutual accountability and transparency across the partnership, which includes commitments to gender equality. This decentralized model of accountability means all partners (local education groups, coordinating agencies, civil society, governments, GPE Secretariat, GPE Board, grant agents and development partners) hold each other accountable for achieving shared goals and objectives on gender equality. Section 3.3 of the paper sets out clearly the roles and responsibilities on gender equality of all actors within the partnership at the country and international levels.



- **Governments** are responsible for ensuring that country-level dialogue is based on gender analysis, gender expertise is on the task team and gender is considered as a cross-cutting issue within selected priority reform areas.
- **Grant agents** are required to provide gender and education technical support as well as capacity into building the government-led approved program and budget.
- **Civil society**—nongovernmental organizations and teacher, youth and refugee representative bodies—has a national role, including the provision of national-level intersectional gender expertise, the contribution of context-specific gender evidence, engagement with the education sector analysis, and support to the implementation and monitoring of the education sector plan. Regional and international civil societies also support these responsibilities.
- **Monitoring of actors' responsibilities** will be completed through continued dialogue and midterm reviews of GPE partnership agreements.
- Experience of gender-mainstreaming initiatives across multi-stakeholder partnerships has demonstrated the value of **nominating a gender lead partner** to maintain momentum and accountability within country-level processes. This lead role would be nominated from within the existing country-level education partnership governance mechanism. Suitability to take on this role will vary by country, but it should be based on experience and expertise on gender equality within the country's context.

The leverage generated by the broad partnerships has the potential to transform education in multiple countries. By delivering on the gender ambition set out in GPE 2025 through the approaches highlighted in the paper and being committed to learning and sharing as a global community, there is the potential to make significant gains toward the global goals of achieving gender equality, inclusive and equitable quality education and tangible change for boys and girls in all GPE partner countries.